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A Descriptive Research Study of Biracial Student Teacher Teams. Final Report.

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An experiment was planned to establish pairs, one Negro and one Caucasian, of student teachers who would work together as a team as they did part of their student teaching in a Negro school under a Negro cooperating teacher, and part in a predominantly white school under a Caucasian cooperating teacher. The purpose was to determine whether or not attitudes toward another race would be changed by participation in the biracial program. The control group of 30 Negro and 30 Caucasian subjects were not paired and were assigned to a school for members of their own race. Subjects were from 10 Arkansas teacher education institutions and were placed in 10 different school systems over a period of four semesters. Pre- and posttests which were designed to measure attitudinal responses to items of bias were administered to all subjects. The biracial team approach did change the attitudes of subjects toward members of the other race; Negro and Caucasian student teachers were not brought to a point where they shared common viewpoints, but the differences in their perceptions were narrowed. Attitudes of cooperating teachers and other personnel were also changed as a result of day-by-day associations and person-to-person communication. (Included are lists of the most significant changes in both Negro and Caucasian attitudes toward Negro and Caucasian teachers, administrators, students, and toward the project in general.) (JS)

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Final Report

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

A Small Project Research Program
Director: Harold A. Haswell, Office of Education
Region VII/DHEW, 1114 Commerce, Dallas, Texas 75202

Title : A DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH STUDY OF BIRACIAL STUDENT TEACHER TEAMS

Applicant Organization: Philander Smith College, Little Rock, Arkansas, 72203

Initiator: Pearl W Shoudel
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The Dissertation based upon this research study was presented to the University of Houston, Texas, in August, 1968, in partial fulfillment of the requirements by that institution of the Initiator, Pearl W. Shoudel, for the Doctor of Education Degree.

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A DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH STUDY OF BIRACIAL STUDENT TEACHER TEAMS

This study was designed to provide student teachers of two races with experience in human relations and to acquaint them with conditions, attitudes, misconceptions, strengths, and problems of the other race. An experiment was planned to establish pairs, one Negro and one Caucasian, of student teachers who would work together as a team as they did part of their student teaching in a Negro school under a Negro cooperating teacher, and part in a predominantly white school under a Caucasian cooperating teacher. The study was designed to determine whether or not attitudes toward another race were changed by participation in the biracial program.

The control group of thirty Negro and thirty Caucasian subjects were not paired and were assigned to a school for members of their own race. Tests designed to measure attitudinal responses to items of bias were administered to the subjects in both the experimental and control groups. This attitude scale was administered before and after participation in the student teaching program.

Initially, only Philander Smith College and Little Rock University were to supply the subjects for this study. Since neither institution has a large number of student teachers, especially in the fall semesters, the control groups of student teachers were selected from among the students at Henderson State College, in Arkadelphia, and Arkansas Mechanical and Normal College, Pine Bluff,

Arkansas. During the two-year period of activity other institutions in Arkansas supplied students for the experimental groups. The ten institutions involved were:

Arkansas College, Batesville
AM&N College, Pine Bluff
Arkansas State University, Jonesboro
Harding College, Searcy
Henderson State College, Arkadelphia
Little Rock University, Little Rock
Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia
Philander Smith College, Little Rock
State College of Arkansas, Conway
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Originally, only the Little Rock Public School System was designated to place the biracial teams. During the second term the North Little Rock and Pulaski County School Systems also placed teams and during the second year the program was extended to other cities in Arkansas. A total of ten systems participated:

Arkansas Childrens' Colony, Conway
Helena-West Helena Public Schools
Hope Public Schools
Hot Springs Public Schools
Lake Village Public Schools
Little Rock Public Schools
Little Rock Easter Seal Rehabilitation Center
Malvern Public Schools
North Little Rock Public Schools
Pulaski County Public Schools

Procedures

Initiating a biracial student teacher program in the 1967-1968 academic year presented several problems. Most of the unique problems in this study were in the areas of obtaining subjects and in securing teaching locations. The student teachers were willing, and even eager, to participate in the program. The problem stemmed from the reluctance of both Caucasian and Negro institutions of

higher education to engage in a program of this nature. There were administrators in Caucasian institutions who were opposed to racial integration and denied permission for student teachers to participate. Other administrators in Caucasian institutions preferred not to disturb their existing routine for the assignment of student teachers. At the same time Negro schools demonstrated a reluctance to participate in the program. The applicant organization, Philander Smith College, is a small, Negro college having only about six hundred fifty students. In the fall of 1967 there were only four students registered for elementary and four for secondary student teaching. The director of secondary student teachers did not wish to participate. At another Negro institution, the director of student teaching did not wish to involve either elementary or secondary students. Reasons expressed were: (1) the institution was already involved in other types of research, (2) the students preferred to be assigned to neighborhood schools for their teaching experience, and (3) advance information about the individual Caucasian student teachers would have to be supplied to him before he could select Negro students to complete teams.

School districts were reluctant to place the subjects for some of the same reasons. They were concerned, first, with the reactions of patrons to an innovative, biracial program being added to the existing community concern about the desegregation of schools. Some administrators recognized the need for the program, but other administrators in the hierarchy had underlying

antipathies to the program which caused them to express their willingness to participate but fail to follow through with administrative action. The first district to agree to cooperate with the study reserved the right to coordinate the pairs and to place them. This precluded the dissemination of the advance information to the Negro director who also wished to do the pairing. Later, all school districts wanted the research director to arrange the pairing, but reserved the right to place the teams after the pairing was done. Procrastination by administrators and by college directors was a major deterrent to the coordination of the student teachers.

Due to the complexity of these problems in securing members of the experimental group, permission was requested and granted that one student might participate as a "single" by being placed for half of the student teaching period in one school and half in a school of the other race. An alternative was for one student teacher of either race to be assigned to an integrated school having no less than a thirty per cent enrolment of the minority race and to serve in two rooms under both a Negro and a Caucasian cooperating teacher. This was necessary particularly for secondary participants.

The following table shows the number of participating teachers and student teachers during each semester of activity between September 1, 1967 and May 20, 1969:

Semester	Cooperating Teachers	Pairs	Singles
Fall, 1967	4	2	0
Spring, 1968	27	13	1
Fall, 1968	17	7	3
Spring, 1969	25	8	7
Totals	*73	30	11

*Note: There were two more cooperating teachers than student teachers. Originally, the institution from which the student teacher came was responsible for the stipend paid to the first cooperating teacher with the grant paying a stipend to the second teacher. In two cases, participating students came from institutions which did not pay a stipend. Rather than have only the second teacher receiving a stipend, it seemed that better human relations required the payment of a stipend from the grant to both teachers.

Findings

Tests designed to measure attitudinal responses to items of bias related to school administrators, teachers, and pupils were administered to the student teachers of both the control and experimental groups before and after their participation in this project. Participation in the biracial team approach to student teaching did change the attitudes of the subjects toward members of the other race. The Negro and Caucasian student teachers were not brought to a point where they shared common viewpoints, but the differences in their perceptions were narrowed. A detailed analysis of the responses to each item on this attitude scale may be found in the unpublished dissertation based upon this research.[1]

[1] Shoudel, Pearl W. "A Descriptive Research Study of Biracial Student Teacher Teams." Unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, University of Houston, Texas, 1969.

The more significant changes were made in:

(1) The fears of Negro student teachers as to how they would be accepted by white faculties.

(2) Negroes who found it easier to communicate with Caucasian children than they had expected.

(3) Caucasians who found Negro children less rude and naughty; Negro student teachers who found white children more polite and cooperative than they had anticipated.

(4) Both groups found teaching an integrated class no more difficult than segregated classes, contrary to their expectations.

(5) Both groups found corporal punishment to be used more frequently by Negro teachers.

(6) Both groups found a little more social acceptance by the other race than they had expected.

(7) Negroes found administrators less formidable than they had been led to believe.

(8) Caucasians found the stereotypic idea that Negroes are intellectually inferior to be untrue. Some Negro student teachers also changed their opinions in this area, probably having confused achievement with intellectual ability.

These changes in attitudes were brought about through the close relationship and daily associations required for a successful student teaching experience. A regular teacher can be assigned as a minority teacher in a school. She can speak pleasantly when spoken to. She can avoid the teachers lounge. She can, with discretion, avoid becoming controversial. She may, in the process, fail to get to know the people with whom she works. It was impossible for the student teachers to set themselves apart from the entire school. They had to interact with the administrators, several teachers, and with many children.

In order to examine more fully the relationship between the student teachers and their pupils an additional rating scale was administered. On this device were a list of twenty-five character traits stated in adjective form, such as adaptable, aggressive, and antagonistic. The subject were asked to mark the scale to show whether the characteristic applied or was atypical of Negro or Caucasian children. Changes in how the members of the experimental group characterized children were more prominent in these areas:

(1) Caucasians found Negro children more adaptable, social and dependable.

(2) Caucasians found Negro children less aggressive; Negroes found Caucasian children less aggressive.

(3) Caucasians found Negro children more competitive while Negroes found Negro children less competitive than they had thought.

(4) Both Caucasians and Negroes found Caucasian children less courteous, but Caucasians found Negroes more courteous than they had expected and the Negro student teachers decided that Negro children were less courteous.

(5) Caucasian student teachers found Negro children much more creative and inquisitive than they had assumed.

(6) Both groups decided that children, Negro and White, are more cruel and deceptive than they had thought upon being pretested.

(7) Caucasians found Negro children to be more obedient and trustworthy.

(8) Negroes found Negro children more defiant, and Caucasian children less defiant than they had expected.

(9) Caucasian student teachers found Negro children less destructive than their preconceptions had indicated.

Fewer than forty per cent of the control Caucasian subjects ascribed the items adaptable, competitive, creative, dependable,

inquisitive, obedient, observant, possessive, sociable, and trustworthy to Negro children, reflecting their lack of contact with Negroes. High percentages of the control Negro subjects ascribed the same items to Caucasian children, perhaps reflecting their own internal feelings of inferiority. The experimental groups were less extreme on the pre test than were the control groups. This may have been because the experimental subjects had been drawn from a more urban population. The Negro and Caucasian subjects did not close the gaps completely after having participated, but the intervals were narrowed substantially.

The following table shows the pre test low and high percentages of the subjects in the control and experimental groups who responded "yes" to the characteristic as a trait applicable to children. The comparable post test low and high percentages of the subjects in the experimental group is shown to indicate the change in attitudes of the participants in the biracial program.

Conclusions

Changes in attitudes were brought about through day-by-day association and person-to-person communication. Not only were the attitudes of the thirty student teachers changed but so were the attitudes of the cooperating teachers, and to varying degrees, other teachers, parents, administrators, and children.

Few Negro student teachers were enthusiastic about participating in the program. Most of them verbalized these feelings as the time approached to begin student teaching. They could not easily identify

TABLE II

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE RANGES OF TEST PERCENTAGES OF BOTH GROUPS WITH POST TEST PERCENTAGES OF EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

No.	Item	Approximate Percentages 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
1	Adaptable	//////////////////// xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
2	Aggressive	/////// xxxxxxxxxx
3	Antagonistic	///////// xxxxxxxxxxxx
4	Boastful	/////////// xxxx
5	Competitive	//////////////////// xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
6	Courteous	//////////////////// xxxxxxxxxxxx
7	Cheerful	/////////// xxxxxxxx
8	Creative	/////////////// xxxxxxxxx
9	Cruel	////////// xxxxxxxx
10	Deceptive	////////// xxxxxx
11	Defiant	/////////////// xxxxxxxxxxxxx
12	Dependable	//////////////////// xxxxxxxxx
13	Destructive	//////////// xxxxxxxxxxxx

TABLE II (Continued)

No.	Item	Approximate Percentages 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
14	Fearful	////////////////// xxxxxxxx
15	Inquisitive	////////////////////// xxxxxxxx
16	Introversive	////////////// xxxxxxxxxxx
17	Jealous	////////////// xxxxxxxxxx
18	Obedient	////////////// xxx
19	Observant	////////////////// xxxxxxxxx
20	Possessive	////////////////// xxxx
21	Selfish	////////////// xxxxxxxxxxx
22	Self-Sufficient	////////////// xxxxxxxxxxx
23	Sensitive	//////// xxxxx
24	Sociable	////////////////////// xxxxx
25	Trustworthy	////////////////// xxxxxxxxx

NOTE: / indicates pre test percentages
x indicates post test percentages

their fears, but they were doubtful that their experiences in a Caucasian school would be pleasant. Many of their anxieties and fears were unnecessary. Some of them were dissipated during the early stages of the program. They found rather quickly that their experiences would not be too difficult. At the conclusion of the program, most Negro student teachers indicated that the experience had been beneficial and rewarding. The following statement is typical:

> The program was quite beneficial to me in that I gained a new insight about Caucasians, their stereotyped feelings (as well as my own); and I established friendships among them.

Many Caucasian student teachers are anxious for experience which will prepare them for the society which is emerging as a result of the Negro protest movement. They volunteer for service which takes them into the Negro community. They are interested in people; less inhibited than the older generation; and they can identify more readily with the Negroes' struggle for acceptance, since the painful memory lingers on of their own struggle from adolescency into adulthood. Many of them would do more to push back racial barriers if parents or other conservative adults did not interfere.

The white students had anxieties, as did the Negroes, but of a different nature. They did not fear ostracism, although they may have experienced it. They may have expected the Negro faculties to be overjoyed at having another white person assigned to the school and then found that not quite the reaction of the Negroes. Some of

them may have feared that physical violence might erupt even in an elementary school. They may have had unidentifiable anxieties, as did the Negroes. Whatever their reactions to the assignment, they needed time to adjust to it. During the first week in the school one student said, "I don't have any problems, but I feel so terribly alone and out of place." At the conclusion of the program the general reaction of the Caucasian participants was:

> I was fortunate to do part of my student teaching in a Negro school. The experience gave me more of an insight about accepting a position as a full time teacher in a Negro school. The anxieties that I had about working with Negro people are gone.

Few Negro cooperating teachers in the area where this study was conducted had had opportunity to direct a Caucasian student teacher. Any Negro teacher who was asked, "could you work with a Caucasian student teacher?" would reply that there could be no difference in the student teaching program for either a Caucasian of Negro prospective teacher. However, the Negro teacher who was asked, "Will you accept a Caucasian student?" would reply that she would have to think about it. It was particularly difficult for Negro teachers to accept these teams. Anything innovative is a challenge, and for the challenge to present a threat as well made the Negro teachers wary of becoming involved. Their first concern was the possibility of being critically observed by not only the white student teachers but white supervisors as well. The second concern was the possibility of unfavorable comparison with Caucasian teachers. Another concern was the possibility of contributing to

research which might discredit the Negro race. A vital anxiety was related to job security: To refuse to participate might result in dismissal; to participate might precipitate an unfavorable report to the administration. None of these concerns could be expressed to a principal, so, disregarding anxieties, Negro teachers agreed to accept pairs of student teachers. After accepting them, they became willing to discuss the problems with Caucasian students as readily as with Negro student teachers. A typical comment at the end of the program was:

> I finally decided to take one ofthe teams. I have not been sorry. It has been one of the greatest things that has happened for our people. I hope that our school can keep both of these young people next year. They would be an asset to our faculty. I think that we are learning more from them than we have taught them.

Some of the Caucasian cooperating teachers were enthusiastic about the program while others were apprehensive. Some of them accepted the teams because they thought it would be a contribution to the profession. Others, showing astuteness about the social implications, thought that Caucasian pupils would profit by the experience and that they could help bridge the gap between the races. Some agreed to participate in response to requests from principals; some rather than to appear to the biased. The general reaction was something like this comment:

> I found no difference in the way the students, other teachers, lunch room workers, or principal reacted to either the Caucasian or Negro student teacher in my room. There is a great need for this kind of teaching, and I think that it helps us to improve our techniques. The program seemed to work perfectly in our school and I do hope we can have more teams in the future.

At some point during the program each Caucasian teacher usually made a comment such as this: "I will have to admit that I was surprised to find the Negro student teacher so well prepared."

Summary

This study showed changes in the attitudes of Negro and Caucasian participants toward members of the other race which were brought about by the close associations and interpersonal relationships of the subjects. From the findings it would seem that as individual Caucasians show by their actions a desire to help correct the conditions imposed by an aggregation, Negroes should examine their personal prejudices apart from their protest manifestations. Perhaps people who have been oppressed, necessarily find it more difficult to accept personal identity and to surrender group identification. As Caucasians reverse themselves and offer friendships, individual Negroes must try to accept the overtures without reservations. The assimilation of the races is a two-way process. Minority groups are affected in various ways by legislation, desegregation institutions, riots, programs for the culturally deprived, and by demonstrations which emphasize the Negro protest movement. Improving education where conditions are unequal is a primary concern; however, real progress in human relations depends upon people. It remains that the "slow undoing" is best accomplished by person-to-person communication and interaction.